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Natural News

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EPA Region 8 Grant Proposals due Dec. 20, 2005 ~ Whitney Trulove-Cranor, EPA Region 8

The U.S. EPA Region 8 office is requesting proposals for the Fiscal Year 2006 Regional Priorities Grant Program. Region 8 is competitively seeking project proposals that will achieve measurable environmental and public health results within the following three priority areas: Energy, Agriculture, and Enhancing Capacity to Provide Public Health and Environmental Protection in Region 8 states and on tribal lands. The funding programs included in this announcement are: TMDL, Tribal Source Water Protection, Wetlands Program Development Grants, Source Reduction Assistance (Pollution Prevention), Strategic Agriculture Initiative, the Regional Geographic Initiative and the Environmental Priorities Program. The RFP can be accessed on the Region 8 web site at: http://www.epa.gov/region08/community_resources/grants/grants.html

Project proposals are due December 20, 2005.

Helping Out in New Orleans ~ Nat Miullo and Darcy Campbell, EPA Region 8

Seven employees in the EPA Region 8 Ecosystem Protection Program have been working in New Orleans and Dallas to help with Katrina/Rita relief. That includes almost 20% of our staff! In the next issue of *Natural News*,



Collecting water samples in New Orleans.

~Photo from www.epa.gov

watch for an article detailing their experiences. A large number of other Region 8 programs have also sent staff (Emergency Response, Superfund, NEPA, Water, etc.) The types of activities folks work on include: managing GIS information, working with FEMA, community involvement coordination, and logistical support. People are working 2-3 weeks stretches, often 12-hour days, with no time off. And the stories they have to tell!

Nat Miullo, who is EPA Region 8's Revitalization Advisor, had an interesting talk with a long-time community member while in New Orleans. "I went to dinner in the New Orleans garden district at the home of a developer. They were friends of a co-

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worker I met down there and wanted to say thank you to EPA for what we were doing. His own perspective is that new zoning requirements on building, careful long-term stewardship and adequate open space/wetlands land reuse decision making was the answer to the future of the gulf region. I was very surprised to hear this from him, at such an early time after the storm.”

This is just one story of many, which collectively include thousands upon thousands of people who have lost everything and are caught up in the dialogue of whether to return or not, how to rebuild and what the entire gulf area should become. The debate on what the area should look like and be is fascinating, complex and heartbreaking all at the same time. It is one of the most important civil debates of our time.

An interesting article on ecosystem effects and wetlands related to the hurricanes can be found at:

http://www.usatoday.com/printedition/news/20051114/a_mrgo14.art.htm

Federal response is summarized at:

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/KHIL-6JD52D?OpenDocument>

For more information, see the EPA Region 8 website at:

<http://www.epa.gov/region8/>

You may also contact **Nat Miullo** at miullo.nat@epa.gov or (303) 312-6233.

Good Samaritan Initiative ~ Darcy Campbell, EPA Region 8

EPA launched a Good Samaritan Initiative on August 30, 2005 to foster greater collaboration to accelerate restoration of watersheds and fisheries threatened by abandoned mine runoff. For more information see: <http://www.epa.gov/water/goodsamaritan/>

*"Nature's peace will flow into you as
the sunshine flows into the trees, while
cares will drop off like autumn leaves."*

~John Muir

In early October of this year, Colorado Senators Ken Salazar (D) and Wayne Allard (R) introduced Senate Bill 1848. Under this bill, entities wanting to conduct “Good Samaritan” cleanups could apply for an EPA permit to clean up all or part of an inactive or abandoned mine site that is not on the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL). The permit would limit liability under many environmental laws including Superfund, the CWA, the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Toxic Substances Control Act and the Resource Conservation & Recovery Act (RCRA). For a longer article on this topic, go to www.insideEPA.com, and see the Nov. 11, 2005 issue.

A Heartfelt Farewell to Our Watershed Maven ~ Ayn Schmit, EPA Region 8

Only a rare individual has the vision, leadership ability, organizational savvy, technical expertise, and “make things happen” spirit that enable him to win EPA’s highest honor. Marc Alston is one of those few, receiving a gold medal in 2004 for his stellar accomplishments in protecting and restoring watersheds. Staff at EPA are reluctantly bidding Marc farewell. He will be retiring on Nov 30, and it’s a bittersweet time for EPA and many of our local and state partners who have benefited from his wisdom over the years.

You may not be aware that Marc will not only be retiring from EPA, but will retire as a Captain in the U.S. Public Health Service. Marc has done many things in his career, but during the past ten years he has, both for the City and County of Denver and for EPA, worked to protect and restore the health of watersheds here in Denver and across the region. He has accomplished many remarkable things in that endeavor, from managing nationally-visible river revitalization projects on the South Platte to pioneering the use of Brownfields program tools in assessing and restoring mining-impacted watersheds. Marc’s varied experience with drinking water, Superfund and Brownfields has enabled him to help local communities realize the vision of holistically assessing and protecting their watersheds.

Somewhere along the way, he realized what a tough job local watershed coordinators have, serving as technical experts, project managers, fundraisers, and community boosters and leaders. They are often the linchpin in successful local restoration of water



Marc Alston

~Photo by John Dipentino

quality. So, he jumped into a whole new arena where few technical staff venture. He became trained as a coach and began offering leadership coaching to local watershed leaders across Region 8. During his two years as a coach, first of watershed group leaders, and more recently leaders of other community-based environmental organizations, he has assisted 17 local leaders in becoming more effective in reaching their organizations' environmental goals. Here is what one of his clients had to say:

"The connection between coaching and environmental results again is clear to me. We are now focused on how, why, when, where and who will clean up the waters in our watershed. "

We will really miss Marc here at EPA. He has a way of lightening hearts and showing the way. But the good news is, he's not getting out of the watershed business. He will begin serving on the board of directors of the Colorado Watershed Assembly, a group that assists local watershed groups across Colorado in becoming more effective. And he'll be out there coaching watershed and other environmental leaders well into the future. We wish him all the best.

Watershed Monitoring and Assessment Design Workbooks ~ Barb Horn, Rocky Mountain Watershed Network

The Rocky Mountain Watershed Network has a new tool designed to:

- * Produce a written monitoring and assessment plan that will generate scientifically defensible results;
- * Identify gaps and needs, and develop a plan to fulfill them;
- * Connect monitoring activities in a logical manner to other programs and efforts;
- * Identify target decision makers and their information needs with the sample collection design;
- * Ensure that what is collected, and where, why and how will achieve desired results;
- * Identify how raw data will be analyzed and interpreted;
- * Identify how monitoring results will fulfill information needs and be delivered to a measurable endpoint;
- * Summarize and communicate what you are monitoring and assessing for whom and why;
- * Provide credibility and accountability.
- * Help you use the Clean Water Act in the Rocky Mountains as a tool; and
- * Generate measurable results that protect and restore our waterways!

The workbook is divided into four phases. Phase one is the "People Design" where you determine what questions you are trying to answer, who will make decisions about the data and assessment, and what information is needed. This phase also helps you define your watershed and perform a basic inventory. Phase two is the "Technical Design" and is based on the information needs of decision-makers from phase one. You design what will be sampled, when, where and how it will be sampled, and the necessary quality of the data (data quality objectives, quality control and assurance, and how the raw data will be managed). Phase three is the "Information Design" and takes you through the steps to summarize, analyze, interpret, report and make recommendations. How to manage the data through this data-to-information process is also part of phase three. Finally, phase four is the "Effectiveness and Evaluation Design," which includes task assignments, documentation, design communication and review,

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implementation tips and instructions on how to evaluate the design in context with organization mission, resources, and other monitoring programs within the organization or external.

The workbook also includes “Clean Water Act 101” for the Rocky Mountain States within EPA Region 8 and New Mexico. You can compare aspects of the CWA between states or use the information to design your monitoring efforts. The package also includes training agendas for participants and leaders and slides for each step and phase. The workbook includes chemical, physical, biological and human indicators for river, lake and wetland aquatic ecosystems.

The Rocky Mountain Watershed Network is interested in providing training for this workbook in your watershed. Our unique training model is included in the workbook but we can modify the training for any circumstances.

The Monitoring and Assessment Design Workbook is available in hard copy or on CD. You can modify the worksheets or material to fit your needs. If you would like a copy of the workbook or more information please contact Barb Horn at (970) 382-6667, barb.horn@state.co.us, or at www.RMWN.org.

5th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth Conference in Denver: Building Safe, Healthy, and Livable Communities ~ Deborah Lebow, EPA Region 8

The national New Partners for Smart Growth Conference will be held in Denver, Colorado, January 26-28, 2006. All those interested in reducing the environmental impacts from growth, as well as anyone committed to building safer, healthier, and more livable communities, should attend. See details on registration below. First, a bit about smart growth . . .

What is Smart Growth?

Smart growth is development that simultaneously achieves economic development, strong neighborhoods, and environmental protection. It involves making smart decisions on where and how growth occurs. In general, smart growth practitioners use a set of goals about how future development should be implemented including mixed land use, compact design, walkable communities, preservation of open space, directing development towards existing infrastructure, and providing a variety of transportation choices. Growth that is planned with environmental impacts in mind can result in tremendous environmental benefits, as explained below. Thinking about streets as more than lanes carrying traffic but as cool places to live, work, and walk, is a key component. Smart growth is about more choices, less traffic, vibrant cities, suburbs, and towns, well-planned growth that improves quality of life, and through all that, the resultant reduction in environmental impacts.

Why is EPA interested in Smart Growth?

Smart growth is EPA’s (and many other entities’) effort to help States, Tribes, cities, towns and the development community to create healthy, environmentally-sustainable communities. EPA can do this by providing information on model programs and resources, providing technical assistance and analyzing policy. It is a “pay me now or pay me later” concept. We can develop in a way that avoids or minimizes environmental impacts now, or address them with much more difficulty in the future. We can avoid or minimize impacts on many resources, including:

Air Quality: Although cars are getting cleaner, people are driving more, offsetting some of these gains. Some cities have air quality challenges due to the growth in vehicle mile traveled, resulting in NOx and ozone

issues. Smart growth principles attempt to reduce vehicle miles traveled by clustering development, resulting in shorter trips, or trips not requiring a car, ultimately resulting in improvements to air quality.

Water Quality: Impervious surface cover and urban runoff has a huge impact on the health of our streams and rivers. Dispersed development can produce stormwater runoff almost 50% higher than more concentrated development. It is estimated that watersheds with more than 25% impervious cover have seriously degraded water quality. Smart growth principles have the potential to reduce impervious surface, resulting in better water quality. In addition, reducing water usage from smaller lots results in more efficient water use and systems.

Wetlands and Habitat: Habitat destruction is a major factor threatening 80% or more of the species listed under the Endangered Species Act. A large portion of that habitat loss is wetlands and riparian areas, which are highly productive areas for plant and animal species. The placement of development further from riparian areas, groundwater recharge areas, and wetlands, and the preservation of open space and less fragmentation for plant and animal species, and the avoidance or preservation of wetland acreage, are goals for these smart growth principles.

Energy and Infrastructure: Lower energy consumption and resource consumption can be a consequence of this planning, resulting in substantial savings for homeowners and businesses. More efficient infrastructure planning can result in significant infrastructure cost savings for local governments.

Human Health Benefits: Encouraging communities to be more pedestrian and bike friendly can result in significant quality of life and health benefits. Making these viable modes of transportation can also provide aesthetically more pleasing places, which also can be beneficial to human health.

The Conference

The 5th Annual New Partner's for Smart Growth Conference will be held January 26-28, 2006 at the Adams Mark Hotel in downtown Denver, CO. The conference is sponsored by the Smart Growth Network, EPA, and others. You can register on line, or get more information at www.newpartners.org, or call 1-800-PSU-TODAY or contact **Deborah Lebow** at lebow.deborah@epa.gov. For more information on this topic see: www.epa.gov/smartgrowth.

Sustainable Practices Newsletter ~ David Schaller, EPA Region 8

Sustainable Practices, a weekly one-page electronic sustainability newsletter, has now entered its sixth year. The newsletter is produced by David Schaller in EPA's Denver regional office and is currently sent to a listserve of over 800 and is read in more than two-dozen countries. Each weekly issue features a brief paragraph on breakthrough innovations, technologies and products offering sustainable solutions to ecological, social and economic challenges. Reference to the original source material, usually in the form of a web site, concludes each summary paragraph. To receive the newsletter directly, contact David at schaller.david@epa.gov. Readers can also access the newsletter and archived back issues on the web site of the Federal Network for Sustainability at <http://www.federalsustainability.org>.

EPA R8 Environmental Education Program ~ Christine Vigil, EPA Region 8

On November 16, 1990, President George Herbert Walker Bush signed the Environmental Education Act, which required that EPA establish an Office of Environmental Education (OEE). The Office, with the support of other Federal agencies, would develop and support environmental education programs and activities across the country. This Act established several programs, including the very popular EE Grant Program that funds hundreds of EE programs across the country; the EE and Training Program (EETAP) which provides workshops and training programs; and the Environmental Internships and Fellowships Program (NNEMS). Also included was the establishment of the EE Advisory Council, an EE Task Force and the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation (NEETF).

The Act established several national annual awards, such as the Theodore Roosevelt, Henry David Thoreau, Rachael Carson, and the Gifford Pinchot Awards. The President's Environmental Youth Award (PEYA) was also begun and awards are presented to children each year in the White House.

Recently, the EPA Administrator combined the Office of Environmental Education with the Office of Children's Health Protection to create a new *Office of Environmental Education and Children's Health Protection*. "Creation of this office elevates the importance and the visibility of the health and education of our sensitive populations, including children and the

aging, and ensures greater accountability from our environmental education programs in achieving environmental results.” For more information about all of these programs, please visit our website at:

http://www.epa.gov/region8/env_ed/ or contact

Christine Vigil, Regional Environmental Education Office, at (303) 312-6605 or vigil.christine@epa.gov.

Update on Wetlands Delineation ~ Dave Ruiter, EPA Region 8

Wetland delineation is the practice of determining whether a wetland exists, and, if so, where is the outer edge of the wetland. Basic to the Corps of Engineers’ (Corps’) and EPA’s regulatory responsibilities under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) is the determination of where the wetland turns into an upland. This information is necessary to define the area of federal responsibility under the CWA.

In 1993, Congress requested that the National Research Council (NRC) review the scientific basis for wetland delineation and the technical validity of the current wetland delineation manual. The NRC report (National Research Council 1995 - <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/4766.html>) supported the basic logic and structure of the existing delineation manual and also concluded that regional variation across the United States affects accuracy of a national delineation manual. The report strongly recommended that delineation procedures be revised to increase their regional specificity.

In response to the NRC report, the Corps and EPA, with assistance of other federal, state academic, and private agencies and individuals, started developing regionalized versions of the wetland delineation manual. A summary of the process can be found at:

<http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/cecwo/reg/>

The results of the first two regional efforts are now available in draft form for review. A copy of the Draft Regional Supplemental Manual for Alaska and for the Arid West Region can be found at the web address above. For more information contact **Dave Ruiter** at (303) 312-6794 or ruiter.dave@epa.gov.

The Energy Policy Act and Stormwater Regulations, ~ Greg Davis, EPA Region 8

The recent signing of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 marked a significant roll back in environmental regulations for stormwater runoff. Section 328 of the Energy Policy Act amended the Clean Water Act such

that the term “oil and gas exploration, production, processing, or treatment operations, or transmission facilities” means all field activities, **whether or not such field activities may be considered construction activities.**

Given the amendments to the Clean Water Act, construction activities associated with oil and gas exploration, production, processing, treatment, or transmission are now exempt under Section 1342(1)(2) of the Clean Water Act. Effective immediately, an EPA Stormwater Permit is not required for uncontaminated runoff from construction activities associated with oil and gas exploration, production, processing, treatment, or transmission regardless of the size of the disturbed area from construction. EPA reserves the right to require a permit for such construction activities that are generating contaminated runoff (i.e., runoff which may cause or contribute to a violation of water quality standards).

Individual states with the legal authority to implement regulations more strict than Federal authority may choose to require permits for both small (1-5 acre) and large (5+ acre) construction activities associated with oil and gas exploration, production, processing, treatment, or transmission.

EPA will propose a rulemaking in December, 2005, to codify these changes, with an anticipated final rulemaking in Spring of 2006. As part of the rulemaking, EPA will define the conditions whereby a construction activity generates ‘contaminated’ stormwater runoff. For more information, contact Greg Davis at davis.gregory@epa.gov

Funding Opportunities

New EPA “Watershed Funding” Website

See these new pages with links to tools, databases and resources about grants, funding and fundraising. Go to: <http://www.epa.gov/owow.funding.html>

Publications and Web Resources

~ Contributed by Marcella Hutchinson, Kim Bartels, Roger Dean, Carol Russell, George Ritz, Toney Ott and Darcy Campbell

USGS Ground-Water Report

“Estimated Withdrawals from Principal Aquifers in the United States, 2000” can be accessed at:

<http://pubs.er.usgs.gov/pubs/cir/cir1279>

DID YOU KNOW?

The National River Restoration Science Synthesis Project estimates that \$1 billion is being spent annually on stream restoration projects in the U.S.

Source: Science Magazine, April 29, 2005

LGEAN

The Local Government Environmental Assistance Network (LGEAN) is a "first-stop shop" providing environmental management, planning, funding, and regulatory information for local government elected and appointed officials, managers and staff. Go to: <http://www.lgean.org>

EPA Watershed Discussion Board

The Office of Water, launched a new on-line Watershed Discussion Board. This forum offers watershed protection practitioners and citizens a platform to exchange ideas, so that innovative solutions and ideas can be easily shared in (near) real-time cyberspace. The Forum currently includes the following six categories:

Community Involvement, Smart Growth/Low Impact Development, Source Water Protection, Stormwater Best Management Practices, Sustainable Financing and Watershed Planning Tools.

Please visit <http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/forum/forum.html> and join in!

Watershed Academy Webcasts

EPA's Watershed Academy sponsored its second Webcast on how to conduct effective watershed outreach campaigns on July 20. The entire presentation, complete with audio, can be viewed at the Clu-In Web site at: http://www.clu-in.org/conf/tio/gettinginstep_072005/.

The June 22nd Webcast on "Eight Tools of Protection for Developing Areas" featuring Tom Schueler with the Center for Watershed Protection can also be accessed at: http://www.clu-in.org/conf/tio/watershedtools_062205/.

EPA plans to host Webcasts monthly. Future offerings will be posted on the Watershed Academy Web site at: <http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/wacademy/webcasts/>.

U.S. National Academies Water Information Center

This is a new web portal to all the Academies' water-related reports. Topics range from watershed assessment and restoration to water supply. All reports can be read for free on-line. See <http://water.nationalacademies.org>

Source Water Outreach

Handy resource for Municipal officials on why and how to protect your sources of drinking water. Common causes of water pollution such as stormwater management, underground storage tanks, and hazardous materials use and disposal are covered.

See <http://www.neiwpcc.org/Index.htm?sourcewateroutreach/index.htm~mainFrame>

Got Mercury?

Check out this seafood mercury calculator at: www.gotmercury.org

National Study of Chemical Residues in Lake Fish Tissue

EPA is releasing the third and fourth years of data from the National Study of Chemical Residues in Lake Fish Tissue, a four-year national survey of freshwater fish contamination in lakes and reservoirs in the lower 48 states. You can order data CDs by contacting Leanne Stahl (stahl.leanne@epa.gov) or (202) 566-0404, National Lake Fish Tissue Study Manager.

Freecycle: A Revolution of Reuse

The Freecycle Network is using the internet to revolutionize the concept of reuse. The rules are simple: all items posted on the Freecycle site must be free, legal and appropriate for all ages. Subsequent exchanges are done strictly without a monetary exchange.

that has exchanged hands includes a piano, a fax machine, The Freecycle community is divided into regional areas so no one has to travel too far to get an item they desire.

Communication throughout the network is done via e-mail; all that is needed is Internet access and an e-mail account.

Freecycle is the epitome of a grassroots organization. Go to: <http://www.freecycle.org/>

The Colorado Materials Exchange

<http://www.ucsu.colorado.edu/comex/index.asp>

The Colorado Materials Exchange is sponsored by the University of Colorado Recycling Services as a statewide clearinghouse of non-hazardous surplus and durable goods. Private and public sector groups as well as citizen and non-profit organizations are encouraged to take advantage of the Colorado Materials Exchange as a means of finding low or no cost materials and minimizing waste.

Green Hotels Association

To learn about what "green" hotels and "green" travel is: <http://www.greenhotels.com/>



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Natural News

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If you have an article concerning ecosystem protection, community based environmental protection, or watersheds; we would like to hear from you!

We need your help in updating our mailing list in order to keep Natural News coming to you! Please contact John DiPentino at (303) 312-6594 or dipentino.john@epa.gov, or write to him at the return address below.

Conserve our natural resources, please share your copy with a friend or recycle.

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Ecosystem Stewardship on the web: http://www.epa.gov/region8/community_resources/steward/est.html



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